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BUSHCRAFT USA

Magazine

First Issue

MEMBER
SPOTLIGHT

RECOGNIZING
RESOURCES

BOOK REVIEW

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by Kephart

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Hot Off the Press! *by Koa and Faol*

Well the long-awaited Bushcraft USA Magazine is off and running. We are very excited to bring you what is hopefully the first of many issues to come. In this magazine we hope to discuss the latest forum news, provide educational articles, talk about past and upcoming events, highlight members, and basically whatever else is on your mind.

We are accepting articles from any member that wishes to submit one. Those that are chosen will be published in the free magazine for all to read and learn from. Much

the same as the main forum, we depend on the members to share the knowledge gained over many years of practical experience. Bushcraft USA has never been about any one individual, company, or ideology. It has represented many different philosophies coming together to share a passion for nature and the outdoors. Despite the "USA" in the name we are proud to have a family of members from all over the world with which we may share our experiences. We look forward to working with all of you on this project in the future.



Have an idea for an article?

Submit it for review to bcusamagazine@gmail.com for possible publication in BCUSA Magazine. Authors will be given the opportunity to link to their websites. All articles must be original and are subject to editing.



Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*)

"I AM HARDWOODSMAN, HEAR ME ROAR" *by Koa*

You may have heard some chatter on the forum about this new and upcoming group of rowdy folks, or perhaps heard echoes of their famed battle cry in the wilderness, "We don't need no stinkin' fatwood!" But what exactly are these so called hardwoodsman? Scholars have determined that the term was originally coined by Iz Turley, better known as "Bundlestitch" to most of us. According to Iz much of the bushcraft displayed in the media is done in proximity to soft woods, allowing for ease of cutting, carving, and great access to natural tinders such as

birch bark and fatwood. Some of us, especially in the midwest US, have been surrounded with nothing but hardwood trees such as the infamous hedge (Osage Orange) and Hickory. These trees aren't exactly made of heat treated Or steel but they do present challenges to bushcraft tasks and can be hard on knife and axe, not to mention the human body. Although I wish I could find fatwood somewhere other than the local Walmart, at the end of the day I am still proud to call myself a HARDWOODSMAN.

Characteristics are King

by Iz Turley (Bindlestitch)



It's fall in the hardwoods forest, you're cold and in desperate need of a fire. You pop into a transition zone and see a plant that is sporting a downy fluff at the top of its stem. Instantly recognizing it as flash tinder that you can use to catch your cedar bark more easily, you gather some and stuff it inside your coat. You have no clue that the plant you are looking at is actually Bull Thistle and it doesn't matter because you have recognized a useful resource by its characteristics.

Recognizing resources by characteristics is an invaluable woodsman's skill to cultivate and possess. It can be used and adapted for most anything with only a couple of exceptions.

When you hear this skill described it often involves cordage. This is rightfully so as cordage is high on the list of useful resources found in the woods. The best cordage I've ever seen came from a plant that I don't even know the name of. Several of us were out tromping around when our friend Terry pulled up a plant and tested it for its cordage characteristics. He busted it open and inside were the most beautiful strands of strong, white fiber I'd seen in a plant. It looked and felt like fishing line. I'm fairly sure it was a species of Milkweed (most likely Swamp Milkweed) but that's

the beauty of characteristics, it doesn't matter what it is. I'll know it again when I see it and I'll know exactly what I can use it for.

Cordage is a common skill linked to characteristics but it can be used in almost every other aspect of bushcraft. Take flint for example. True flint is only found in select places across the earth but by using the idea of characteristic recognition you can find rocks that are flint-like and do flint like things. This is how I find rocks that act like flint; I listen for them when I'm walking in a creek bed. If I hear a glassy sound as I step on the rocks I know I've probably found what I'm looking for. I pick up the glassy sounding rock and try to bust off a flake. Sometimes this produces useable tools for starting fires or making blades and sometimes it fails. It all depends on the quality of the rock you find. You can do this just about anywhere in the world where rock is found. I'm not saying you'll always find something with the properties of flint but if it's there then this technique will help you find it.

Bow and drill friction fire is a big deal, both in its usefulness and its mystery for those new to trying it. I get the same question over and over from bow and drill beginners, "What kind of wood should I use?". When they ask this question they're really asking what species they should look for. But that's usually not the answer I give them because all that matters are the characteristics. Dead standing wood that you can make a thumbnail impression in is all you need to know. Species has literally almost zero to do with it and in fact it can hamper your efforts.

I've heard of people using Oak for a bow and drill set when it's in the proper state of rottenness and I use wood on occasion that I have no clue what species it is based solely on its characteristics.

As I touched on earlier, there are a few spots to be careful with when using characteristic recognition. Do not, under any circumstances, judge food or water by its characteristics. You just may make yourself sick or dead if you are that careless about what you stick in your mouth. Always know beyond a shadow of a doubt what you are eating or drinking.

The other area to use caution in would be plants that can cause contact poisoning or dermatitis. If you know what Poison Ivy looks like and what it does to you then you won't be making cordage out of it if you have any smarts.

By learning and applying characteristic recognition a woodsman can increase his chances of survival or enhance his comfort level anywhere in the world. He won't even have to know where in the world he is.



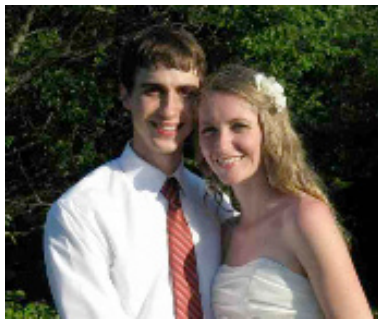
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Congratulations to the new Dr. and Mrs. Homeslice! True to form they had a very bushcrafty outdoor wedding. Apparently Homeslice got caught scouting for sources of natural cordage and tinder while he was supposed to be paying attention to "more important things."

Member Spotlight: Homeslice

Possibly the most improved bushcrafter of the year?



He may be a smart-mouthed little runt but he's definitely got game. First spotted at the original Missouri meet he wasn't expected to make it through the night (at one point we even had him convinced that he inadvertently came to a meeting for the Sierra Club). However, he decided to make his camp anyway and surprised everyone with his

tenacity, passion for learning, and knack for bushcrafting. After months of practice and the purchase of excessive amounts of unnecessary gear we have watched Homeslice develop into a real "hardwoodsman". Wool watch caps off to this yuppie med student turned bushcrafter and first place winner of the Missouri skills competition! -Koa

PENCIL LEAD, PENCILS, AND THUMBS...WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH SURVIVAL? -by Koa

In medicine they say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure but in survival it's more like *an ounce of preparation could mean your backside!* If you're cold and wet or maybe just really hungry, a fire is one of your best friends. Getting a fire started with limited resources is a skill that needs to be practiced over and over again until it's more a reflex than a chore. IA Woodsman taught me (as he has many of you) that even in the

wettest of conditions you can make a good fire. ([Watch Here](#)) The key to your success is in the preparation. Find the right dry tinder, prepare a variety of sizes of kindling (thus the pencil lead, pencils, and thumb size references) ahead of time and protect it while you work. This will allow you to focus on keeping a flame going after you finally get one. There is nothing worse than working hard to get a flame only to let it die due to lack of

kindling. All you need to do is spend the proper time on preparation and you'll be warm, dry, and fed rather than cold, hungry, or dead.





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BOOK REVIEW: ***"CAMPING AND WOODCRAFT"***

by Horace Kephart

Horace Kephart is an unusual author, a man who spent his later life in the woods, but was a known authority on literature and writing. He penned a number of works on the outdoors, wrote a classic on Irish settlers called "Our Southern Highlanders", a book on Sporting Firearms, and one on Camp Cookery.

This manual was written in 1917 and is in 2 volumes bound as one. Volume One is on Camping, and covers outfitting, tents-fixed, shifting camp, and lightweight, camp bedding, clothing, personal kits, provisions, camp making, the camp fire, pests of the woods, dressing and keeping game & fish, and camp cookery.

The chapters on personal kit, provisions, the camp fire, and camp cookery are all as relevant today as when they were written. The tent and bedding sections are dated by modern materials, but still have nuggets of wisdom. Anyone who likes to eat well in the field will enjoy and benefit from Kephart's cookery knowledge!

Volume Two is on Woodcraft and focuses on wilderness wayfinding, maps, compasses, natural guides, route sketching, etc.

There are chapters on marksmanship in the woods, axemanship, tomahawk Shelters, axemens camps, caches, masked camps, cabin building, knots, hitches and

lashings, trophy care, tanning skins, cave exploration, bee hunting, edible plants of the wilderness, living off the country, and accidents and emergencies.

The illustrations include a few black and white photographs, and a lot of really good line drawings.

This is one of the first books I found as a teenager that truly showed the breadth and depth of real woodcraft, or bushcraft. It is still, after all these years, my number one book recommendation to new campers and woodcrafters. Kephart was a master of the knowledge of our craft, and he could write in an easy, readable style. Reading his books is a pleasant way to while away a dreary winter afternoon. I think if you spend some time with him, Kephart will become an old friend with a lot of wisdom to share. The amount of solid knowledge in this book will please and surprise most all of us.

This is THE place to start if you want to get just one book and have a firm foundation to learn from. No stupid ideas or sound bite stunts, this is the real deal.

Download it for free [here](#)

by GreyOne

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New York State BCUSA Meet April 17-18, 2010

On Saturday April 17th at 10am the first New York State meet commenced. Several members of the forum arrived at the Bear Lake trail in McKeever, New York.

The weather was in the high 30s and a warm fire was waiting thanks to Marty Simon, his wife Aggie, Kevin Estela, and Big John, all of whom arrived the night before. Over the next several hours, other members slowly started arriving.



The weather was a drizzly mix of rain and snow. Much of our time was spent close to the fire, covering many topics of discussion one would be likely to find at a bushcraft meet. As the weather cleared up some, a little bit of wandering commenced and Marty Simon shared some of his vast knowledge on the plant life (which was quite remarkable), all this time reminding me, and I am sure others, how much more I want and need to learn.

Later in the afternoon the inevitable comparing of our wilderness tools commenced and knives began passing hands, with "oohs" and "aahs" following. After, there was some disbanding to smaller groups, showing kit, and wandering through the forest. Some wood whittling was abound of course.

Around 4pm I set to putting dinner on the fire. The fare was corned beef, and corned venison. The meat was well seasoned and the sides included plenty of boiled potatoes, cabbage, and carrots. It seemed to go over well, especially on such a cold, overcast day. The remainder of the evening was spent telling stories and sharing knowledge by the fire.

Upon waking, the grounds were covered in a thin layer of ice. The temperature dropped below freezing through the night,

allowing snow and ice to form on everything. The fire was once again the center of attention throughout the morning. Breakfast consisted of bacon and eggs generously provided by one of the crew. A small trap demonstration was put on by Kevin Estela. Later in the morning an arrow was found in the forest, I made quick to fashioning a small Atlatl in which the arrow was thrown for a little while until it was lost once again.

Everyone finally departed around noon on Sunday. Overall a great first meet with fellow forum members and some of their friends. In all 9 showed up, with 8 staying over the night, a healthy turn out in my opinion. I would like to thank Marty, Aggie, Kevin, John, Chris, Timothy, Cody, and Amber for showing up and making it a great time. I have no doubt we will look forward to future meets with all of you.

-Leif B
 (SkogKniv)



Leif was born and raised at the foothills of the Adirondack Wilderness and considers himself to be a wildlife and wilderness enthusiast, and novice bushcrafter for life.

[SkogKniv on YouTube](#)

SQUIRREL POLE

by Terry Barney
(IA Woodsman)

When it comes to putting meat in the pot one of my favorite techniques for snaring is the squirrel pole. Before we go any further, make sure you check your local game laws to see if snaring is legal in your area. Snare sets are in my opinion one of the best and easiest ways to secure game for your table. They work for you 24/7 and bait is not necessary. You can use both manmade and natural materials to construct them. Most of all, snares are easy to make and maintain, with the squirrel pole being one of the easiest to construct and set.

To start with, I like to find a tree that the little tree rats have a nest in. This is what we are going to set our pole against. We know that the squirrels need to climb the tree to get in and out of their home. We also know that they will take the path of least resistance and in this case it will be the pole.



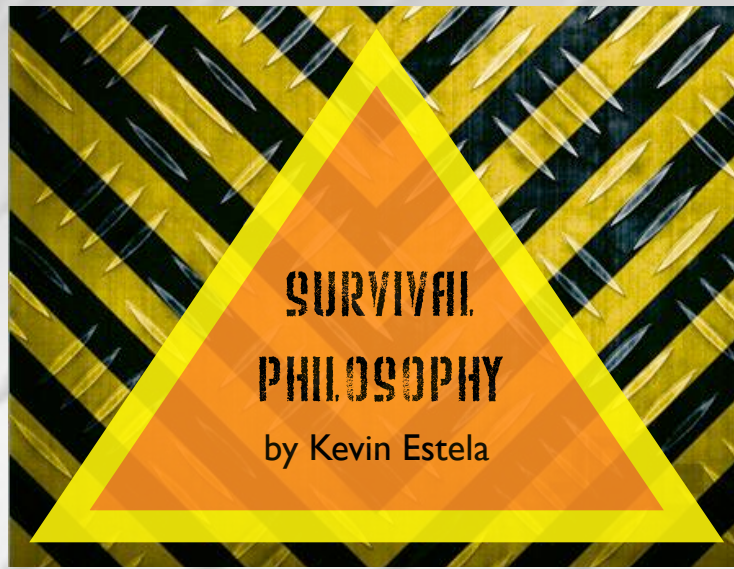
To construct this beauty we are going to have to make several simple snares. If you need help with this part look [here](#). The snares will need to be about 3 fingers wide. I use 7-10 depending on the length of the pole. When attaching them remember to keep the loop about one finger in height above the pole. I always mark my snare location with logging tape or bright cloth so they are easier to find when you check them. I check my snares in the morning and the evening. Good luck and bon appetit!



A squirrel's eye view

Terry Barney is a former Air Force Survival Instructor (now referred to as SERE Specialist) and owner of the Midwest School of Bushcraft.

www.midwestschoolofbushcraft.com



Survival philosophy is a way of viewing situations encountered with optimism and resolve. There is no room for a victim mentality and regardless of the resources you have, your brain is the most important tool (given you haven't lost your head). This philosophy will apply to all aspects of life.

Survival philosophy isn't as exciting, Hollywood camera-worthy or testosterone charged as firecraft in wet conditions, trapping Bambi or slashing through jungle

with a Peruvian. After all, how do you honestly capture the inner workings of someone's mind other than cheesy MTV Real World type "confessionals"? Survival philosophy is usually the section most will skip over while flipping the pages of their favorite survival manual. While it may not have the flair of other skills, developing a proper mindset is of the utmost importance. It is the first topic covered in courses that I teach and for good reason. Without a level head, all decisions become clouded by emotion or lack of logic.

Here are some of the fundamentals for developing your own personal survival philosophy:

ASSESS YOURSELF

...physically, emotionally and your skill level. There is no room for dishonesty here. Take inventory of what you know, your abilities and goals. For example, if you are nervous and unsure when you are cold is there training you can experience to make you stronger? How else can you anticipate how you will react under pressure? Experience what makes you feel vulnerable in a controlled setting before it happens unexpectedly.

DETERMINE YOUR WORTH AND MOTIVATION

Are you a father, sister, best-friend? You are someone who will be missed. Can you carry pictures in your kit to help remind you of who you are to others? I do, and it pushes me further and harder in all aspects of my life.

ALWAYS PREPARED, PREPARED ALL WAYS

This motto of the Wilderness Learning Center is one we impart on the students. With a core set of skills, you don't need a gadget for every contingency. With only a few items like a knife, fire steel and bandana in your pockets, you already are more prepared than most of the population. This level of preparedness will help ease your stress level in performing the most basic survival tasks. That is, if you don't lose your kit.

LEARN ACCEPTANCE AND OPTIMISM

Mother nature will not conform to your needs just because you throw a hissy fit. If you are quick to frustration or anger, time to count down from 10. An unexpected night in the woods should be a learning experience, not an inconvenience. Win little victories in your downtime by making cordage, purifying water or doing anything to free your mind of negative thoughts.

FOLLOW THE S.T.O.P. PROTOCOL

This methodical approach to emergencies prevents rushed decision making:

Stay put

Think

Observe

Plan

Commit this to memory!

The wilderness is filled with endless destinations and it is a place to develop all the physical skills an outdoorsman needs. Just make sure to have a proper survival philosophy when you leave home and before an emergency tests you.

Kevin Estela is a Survival Instructor with the Wilderness Learning Center (www.weteachu.com) in Chateaugay, NY. He regularly teaches courses in all aspects of survival, emergency preparedness and bushcraft throughout the Northeast and Eastern seaboard. He offers free instructional handouts for download at www.slideshare.net under username Estela. To contact Kevin, e-mail kevinestela@hotmail.com with any questions or comments.

Q U I C K P I C :



*Tortoise Shell Butterfly (Aglais urticae) resting quietly on
Burdock (Arctium lappa)
-sent in by Kepis*



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National Meet

Let's try to bring everyone
together for a large scale
bushcraft meet. We don't
know when, we don't know
where, but there has to be
a way to make this
logistical nightmare a
reality! Please post your
suggestions on the forum.

Bushcraft USA would like to extend a special thank you to all of the members who contributed to the first edition. Without such outstanding members this magazine would not be possible. Please send in your submissions for publication and keep this Magazine alive. Please feel free to contact Koa at bcusamagazine@gmail.com if you have any questions or suggestions.